

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON OUR ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT

Within a span of sixty-ninety days, the world has been changed totally. Millions people expired already, and several lakhs are infected, and the numbers are growing continuously worldwide. Reason behind all these, is COVID-19 pandemic and spread of Corona virus. Along with human, our environment has also changed a lot during these months. The rate of pollution of air, water, soil, noise has reduced to a great extent. Sustainable development has been autogenerated in the environment and Mother Nature has cured herself a lot. Clear water, view of snow-capped mountains, visibility of wildlife in locality, appearance of endangered animals, pure oxygen in the air all have returned somehow during the lockdown phase throughout the world. On the other hand, increase in biomedical waste, plastic wastes have been a major concern against the environment. These are

not only polluting the nature but also creating havoc damage to the aquatic flora and fauna. Present paper has tried to put some light on the effect of COVID-19 on our environment.

Keywords: COVID-19, Pandemic, Pollution, Waste, Corona, Environment

INTRODUCTION

Effect of COVID-19 pandemic on our environment is highly significant. As per the experimental analysis and evidences, release of various greenhouse gases like CO₂, CH₄, CFCs have come down to a significant quantity worldwide during the lockdown phase [1]. Activities in more than 200 countries around the world have become standstill due to the outbreak of Corona Virus in last few months which resulted in some good outcome for Mother Nature.

Impact on the environment:

Factories, institutes, automobiles, refineries, recyclers, agricultural machineries, power plants, mining activities were stopped during lockdown phase against COVID-19 outbreak [2]. Number of vehicles plying on the road came to almost zero in number. All these resulted in the extraordinary downfall of the atmospheric concentrations of CO₂, CO, NO₂, SO_x, Particulate Matters throughout the most populous and most polluted towns of the world. The nationwide

lockdown policy and implementation of law and order to maintain social distancing have resulted in developing waste free roads especially beach areas. As there were no vehicles, aircrafts, trains, buses, commercial and public vehicles on the road, noise level has also been reduced to a great extent especially in COVID-19 infected nations [3].

Cities in China, Italy, England, France, USA, Spain were completely locked down after the first wave of COVID-19 spread out and appearance of Corona virus pandemic. In India, lakhs of migrant workers are approaching several modes of communication to reach home in their native places [4]. Countrywide lockdown has resulted in extreme conditions among countrymen. Worldwide, International and Domestic flights have been closed, trains have been cancelled, inter-state bus services have been stopped.

Discussion

People have been maintaining social distancing, wearing masks, gloves and other personal protective equipment [5]. Staying at home advisory has been strictly implemented nationwide. These were all done to control the spread of COVID-19 in terms of Corona virus. Suddenly, industries, factories, communication and several other and businesses have been shut down which

resulted in sharp fall in carbon emission. The lockdown phase resulted in downfall of pollution level into almost 50% than the previous year concentration at the same time [6]. During lockdown phase, vehicular movement was restricted, and industries were shut down. This resulted in the downfall of air contamination to a great extent. Due to suspension of waterways during lockdown phase, neither fishing nor pleasure trips, the water has become clean and in some places crystal clear. In case for Ganga river in India near Haridwar in Uttarakhand water became clean and clear. Animals have been spotted roaming around freely and visiting areas they were not in normal cases. Endangered wildlife was viewed in many places worldwide. Millions of turtles visited land for hatching eggs. Dolphins were viewed in water where they were not seen for decades [7].

COVID-19 and outbreak of corona virus has developed negative effects on our environment. All the affected nations have stopped the waste recycling activities due to safety and security of the workers and employees during the outbreak [8]. Hence, sustainable waste management has not been done at all. Online shopping, packaged drinking water bottles, plastic wrapped food items, groceries, online foods all coupled together to enhance the wastes in and around

us during this lockdown phase. Due to COVID-19, biomedical wastes have increased into several folds [9]. Doctors, nurses, health staffs, patients, COVID suspects, health department officials, police, workers in health centres everybody has generated umpteen number of plastic wastes in the form of gloves, PPE, face shields, masks, shoe cover, head cover, eyeglass etc. [10].

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded by saying that there has been some positive impact observed during the lockdown phase worldwide. These positive impacts of COVID-19 were definitely in terms of nature and environment. Be it decrease in air pollution, reduction in greenhouse gas emission or lowering concentration of particulate matters in the atmosphere. Most populous and most polluted cities in the world situated in India, Italy, France, Spain, England, China, USA, Russia, Germany have observed decrease in the contamination level of air pollutants. On the other hand, quality of water has improved into several fold during the lockdown phase. Several rivers passing through Industrial belts have become clear and clean after the pandemic COVID-19 appeared worldwide. This paper tried to describe the effects of COVID-19 on our environment. Noise level has been

decreased and betterment of coastal beach areas were observed as positive impacts during lockdown phase. On the other hand, among the negative indirect effects, the increase in domestic and medical waste was mentioned. It is important to mention that although the emissions of some greenhouse gases (GHGs) have lowered down as a result of the pandemic, this reduction could have little impact on the total concentrations of GHGs that have accumulated in the atmosphere for years. There is requirement of long-term constructive planning on the basis of sustainable socio economic development. There will be disaster if biomedical wastes like used gloves, masks, shoe cover, heal cover, face shields, aprons, PPE kits are not properly disposed and get mixed with other waste products.

At the end, it can be mentioned that that COVID-19 will generate some positive and some negative effects on our environment. Lowering concentration of greenhouse gases for a short time period is not going to be a solution. Corona virus will stay for some more time, and during the unlocking phase of restrictions situation might get worse again in terms of increase in toxicity level of air, water and land. Proper management and long-term planning is the need of the hour.

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